

Message Text

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70

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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R 211603Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9486

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 1154

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: ELECTION CAMPAIGN GETS UNDER WAY

1. NOMINATIONS OF CANDIDATES FOR PARLIAMENT AND FOR PROVINCIAL COUNCILS WERE OFFICIALLY REGISTERED MARCH 18 AND ELECTION CAMPAIGN NOW IN FULL SWING. WITH PARLIAMENTARY AND PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS TAKING PLACE SIMULTANEOUSLY, THIS YEAR'S GENERAL ELECTION WILL BE LARGEST, IN TERMS OF CANDIDATES AND SEATS BEING CONTESTED, IN HISTORY OF SA.

2. NEVERTHELESS, LEVEL OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN ELECTION IS VERY LOW AT THIS POINT. INTEREST NO DOUBT WILL INCREASE AS APRIL 24 ELECTION DATE APPROACHES. HOWEVER, BECAUSE IT UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED THAT NATIONAL PARTY(NP) HAS ELECTION SEWED UP, ELECTORATE COULD CONTINUE TO BE BORED BY CAMPAIGN AND TURNOUT IN MANY CONSTITUENCIES COULD BE RELATIVELY LOW. IN MARGINAL CONSTITUENCIES THIS WOULD BE TO ADVANTAGE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNITE PARTY OR PROGRESSIVE PARTY. NEVERTHELESS NP'S VICTORY

MARGIN SHOULD NOT BE MATERIALLY AFFECTED.

3. CAMPAIGN SPEECHES THUS FAR BEAR OUT EARLIER PREDICTIONS OF WHICH ISSUES LIKELY TO BE EMPHASIZED BY NATIONALISTS AND THEIR OPPONENTS. NATS ARE STRESSING THAT NP BEST EQUIPPED TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL THREATS TO SA'S SECURITY AND THAT SOUTH AFRICANS NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD ECONOMICALLY. UNITED PARTY (UP) IS ATTACKING NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT'S RACIAL POLICIES AS CONSTITUTING SA'S BIGGEST SECURITY RISK BECAUSE SA INCREASINGLY ISOLATED INTERNATIONALLY AND BECAUSE OF GROWING ALIENATION OF BLACKS AT HOME. UP CLAIMING ITS FEDERAL POLICY PROVIDES MEANS OF ACHIEVING RACIAL HARMONY IN SA. IT ALSO CHARGING NATIONALISTS WITH DOING NOTHING CONSTRUCTIVE TO CONTROL INFLATION. FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE VANTAGE POINTS, PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND HNP WHALING AWAY AT BOTH NP AND UP. PROG LEADER, COLIN EGLIN'S THEME IS THAT ELECTION IS NOT GOING TO DECIDE WHO GOVERNS SA BUT WHAT THE QUALITY OF PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION IS GOING TO BE.
HURD

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